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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/524,040	03/13/2000	Derek D. Mahoney	2506.1013-001	6480

21005 7590 06/10/2003

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, TUAN DUC

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2643

DATE MAILED: 06/10/2003

13

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/524,040

Applicant(s)

MAHONEY ET AL.

Examiner

Tuan D. Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5-18 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-4, drawn to an interchangeable hearing aid that is arranged adjacent to a tympanic membrane of a user, classified in class 381, subclass 328.
 - II. Claims 5-10, drawn to a non-specific removable hearing aid with component mounting, classified in class 381, subclass 324
 - III. Claims 16-18, drawn to a housing of a hearing aid unit, classified in class 381, subclass 322.
2. Inventions group I, group II and group III are unrelated. Inventions are unrelated if it can be shown that they are not disclosed as capable of use together and they have different modes of operation, different functions, or different effects (MPEP § 806.04, MPEP § 808.01). In the instant case the different inventions group I is directed to an interchangeable hearing aid that is arranged adjacent to a tympanic membrane of a user, group II is directed to a non-specific removable hearing aid with component mounting and group III is directed to a housing of a hearing aid unit.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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4. During a telephone conversation with Leo R. Reynolds on 05/28/2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-4. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 5-18 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. This application contains claims 5-18 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in this paper. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancelation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 6,205,227 (Mahoney et al).

Regarding claim 1, Mahoney et al discloses a "one size fit all" peritympanic hearing aid (figure 1 and column 14 lines 19-26) such that a distal end of the body is disposed proximally adjacent to a tympanic of the user.

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Mahoney et al does not restrict the hearing aid to fit one side of the ear canal of the user. However, the hearing aid that is inserted in the ear canal is well known and it could be fitted in either side of the ear canal.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to use the hearing aid by Mahoney et al for a comfortable and convenient fitting.

Regarding claim 2, Mahoney et al also discloses the hearing aid body formed of two half shell joined together with hollow interiors for housing hearing aid components (column 6 lines 39-55).

Regarding claim 3, Mahoney et al further shows a soft tip is secured at the distal end of the body (column 7 lines 58-67 and column 9 lines 50-55).

Regarding claim 4, Mahoney et al further teaches wherein the tip includes a sound port for coupling sound from a receiver housed in the body to the membrane of a hearing aid user (column 9 lines 60-67 and column 10 line 1).

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tuan D. Nguyen whose telephone number is (703) 305-7168. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:15-4:45. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curt Kuntz can be reached on (703) 305-4708. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned


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are (703) 872-9314 for regular communications and (703) 872-9314 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

TDN

June 4, 2003


CURTIS KUNTZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600